



USA TODAY WEEKEND



Legend tunes up for 'Jesus Christ Superstar Live'

Sara Bareilles and Alice Cooper join Grammy winner in modern clothes for Brooklyn audience on Sunday. **In Life**

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NEWSLINE

IN SPORTS



PATRICK GORSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS

Loyola is Chicago's new favorite team

Nancy Armour: Suddenly everybody wants a piece of Final Four Ramblers

IN NEWS

Emotions run high at Sacramento funeral

In eulogy for Stephon Clark, Sharpton says death "woke up the nation"

Russia will expel 60 American diplomats

Move is "tit-for-tat" after Western response to poisonings in Britain

IN MONEY

Is 'techlash' going to sink your 401(k)?

Even if you don't own Facebook stock, your retirement might depend on it



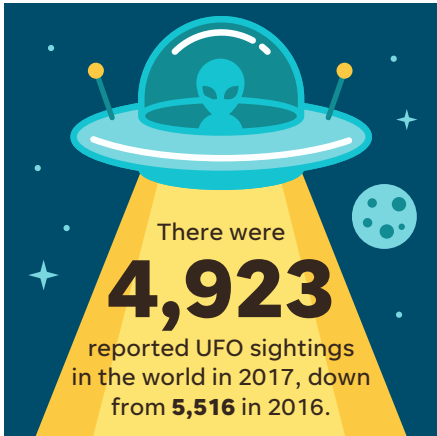
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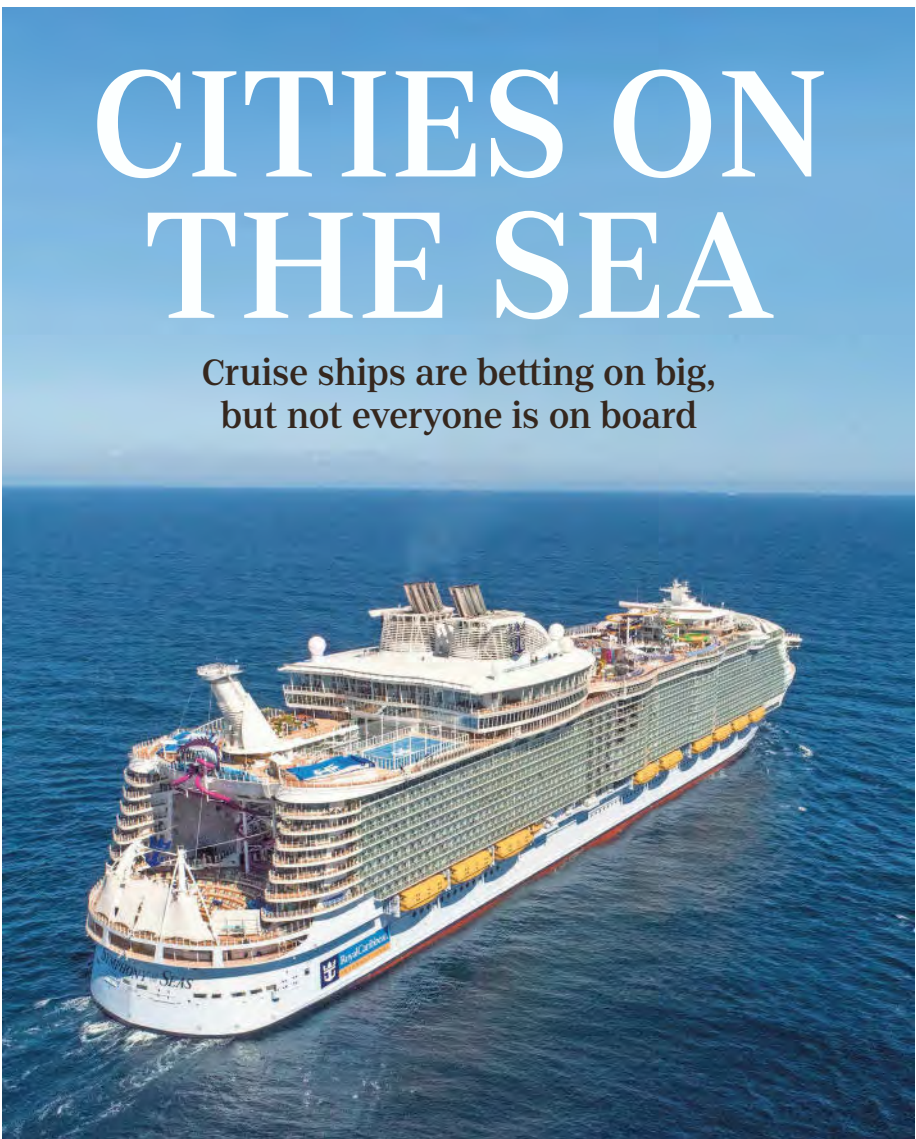
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NOTE Actual number is likely higher as sightings are reported to several worldwide agencies
SOURCE National UFO Reporting Center
www.ufocenter.com
MIKE B. SMITH, KARL GELLES/USA TODAY



SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS BY MICHEL VERDURE/ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL

CITIES ON THE SEA

Cruise ships are betting on big, but not everyone is on board

Gene Sloan
USA TODAY

BARCELONA – Intimate it is not. Eighteen decks high and 1,188 feet long, Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas, which makes its maiden voyage Saturday, has room for 6,680 passengers at full capacity. Add a crew of 2,200 and on busy weeks you could find nearly 9,000 people on board.

Like the megaresorts of Las Vegas or Orlando, today's cruise ships have become destinations unto themselves, with more attractions, shows, restaurants and nightspots than you could possibly experience in a typical week-long getaway.

The enormous choice of activities on the new crop of megaships — deck-top water parks to Broadway shows — also is key to the allure.

"We had eight sea days, and we never ran short of things to do," says Jessalynn Strauss, 41, of Elon, N.C., a college professor and part-time travel blogger who completed her first sailing on one of Royal Caribbean's biggest ships. "It was almost like we'd moved to a new city."

Royal Caribbean isn't alone in going big in recent years. Rivals MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line and Carnival Cruise Line have been rolling out their biggest ships ever, too.

Symphony's outdoor decks feature three pool zones, a trio of waterslides, two surf simulators, a miniature golf course, rock climbing walls and more. Inside there are nearly two dozen restaurants and snack outlets (everything from a Jamie Oliver eatery to a Starbucks), multiple bars, a comedy

See SHIPS, Page 2A

How passenger ships compare

TITANIC (1912)



Length: **882 feet, 9 inches**
Width: **92 feet, 6 inches**
Gross tonnage: **46,328**

NORDIC PRINCE (1971)



Length: **552 feet**
Width: **78 feet, 8 inches**
Gross tonnage: **18,346**

VOYAGER OF THE SEAS (1999)



Length: **1,021 feet**
Width: **156 feet**
Gross tonnage: **138,194**

SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS (2018)



Length: **1,188 feet**
Width: **215 feet, 5 inches**
Gross tonnage: **228,081**

SOURCE Royal Caribbean; USA TODAY research
JANET LOEHRKE /USA TODAY

VA failures persist after three secretaries

Administrations change, suffering stays the same

Donovan Slack
and Dennis Wagner
USA TODAY NETWORK

On the front lines at the Department of Veterans Affairs — in the agency's 1,240 hospitals and clinics — it doesn't much matter who holds the secretary's job in Washington.



David Shulkin

David Shulkin, who was fired Wednesday, was the third VA secretary in four years. If President Trump's nominee to lead the agency, Navy Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson, is confirmed, he will be the fourth.

Each leader sought to fix the department, laying out visions and priorities — Shulkin's top priority was "access," making sure veterans got appointments when they needed them. His predecessor, former Procter and Gam-

See VA, Page 6A

About Trump's nominee

President says Ronny Jackson knows military challenges firsthand, **6A**

Authorities found that 64% of mass-attack suspects had symptoms of mental illness.

Secret Service: Signs were there before attacks

Kevin Johnson
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Many suspects linked to violent attacks in schools and other public places last year were stalked by symptoms of mental illness, and nearly half were motivated by real or perceived personal grievances, a Secret Service report found.

An examination of 28 attacks, which claimed nearly 150 lives and wounded hundreds from Orlando to Las Vegas, found that more than three-quarters of the assailants engaged in suspicious communication or conduct that raised concerns from others before the assaults, according to the report released Thursday.

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